REMARKS

Claims 1 – 36 are pending in the application and stand rejected. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims.

Claims 1 and 34 stand rejected under Section 103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,734,724 issued to Kinoshita in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,764,759 issued to Hamilton, or U.S. Patent No. 5,987,098 issued to Holland, or U.S. Patent No. 6,580,793 issued to Dunn. Claim 17 stands rejected under Section 103 as being unpatentable over Kinoshita in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,694,373 to Sastry or Wintour. Claim 26 stands rejected under Section 103 as being unpatentable over Kinoshita in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,558,180 issued to Scordo.

Kinoshita discloses an audio communications control unit that switches left and right channel audio signals to reproduce the audio channels at a terminal.

Hamilton discloses call processing for echo characteristics of a telephone line.

Holland discloses call processing with plural voice boards.

Dunn discloses an echo canceling system with self deactivation.

Sastry discloses switching of data connections from one processor to another.

Wintour discloses a telephone system having replaceable echo cancellers.

Scordo discloses a programmable audio mixer for mixing conference locations with matrix multiplication.

Claim 1 as amended recites, in part, "processing the audio signals according to desired acoustical procedures with the pooled resources, the desired acoustical procedures reducing the feedback signals."

Claim 17 as amended recites, in part, "a signal processing (SP) module having digital signal processing resources for performing signal processing on the feedback signals of the

received audio signals under direction of the CSM to produce processed audio signals, the CSM operable to assign audio signals to the digital signal processing resources."

Claim 26 as amended recites, in part, "a centralized signal processing (SP) module for performing SP on the audio signals to compensate for the feedback signals received from the plurality of distributed communications terminals responsive to the room models associated with the communications terminals from which the audio signals were received, to produce processed audio signals."

Claim 34 recites, in part, "responsive to determining that the distributed communications terminal is active, allocating a portion of the central pool of signal processing resources to processing a signal from the communications terminal, the processing compensating for sounds from the speaker of the communications terminal that are picked up by the microphone of the communications terminal."

Applicants have amended the claims to clarify that signal processing resources to prevent feedback loops forming between the microphone and the speaker of a communication terminal are centrally located as pooled signal processing resources. Each of Applicants' independent Claims 1, 17, 26 and 34 recite a limitation of pooled or centralized signal processing to reduce, perform signal processing or compensate feedback signals. The references cited by the Examiner fail to teach, disclose or suggest a centralized pool of signal processing resources allocated to audio feedback signals of distributed communications terminals. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that all of pending Claims 1-36 are allowable and request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections and issue a notice of allowance without further delay.

CONCLUSION

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is solicited. Nonetheless, should any issues remain that might be subject to resolution through a telephonic interview, the examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being sent via facsimile on May 25, 2004.

Attorney for Applicant(s) — Date of Signature: 25 May 2004

Respectfully submitted,

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